9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943) 1949
OI17 Murngin OI17

3.

CONCEPTION OF WEALTH, THE GIVING OF PRESENTS AND THE IDEA OF "PAYMENT"

435 The ideas of *wealth* and *value* in a strictly material eco-
436 nomic sense are difficult to define in Arnhem Land. There is nothing approaching "money" or its equivalent, no currency that can be used as a measure or standard of value or medium of exchange, no means of accumulating wealth in condensed form. The term *gerri* is applied to all objects of value, to material possessions.

435 The first thing that must be understood clearly is that
778 for the Arnhemlander all material objects are divided sharply into two categories, those which are *märdai'inboi* or *yarkomirri* (sacred), and those which are *wäkkinŋu*[22] (profane). Objects of the first class, called *märdai'inboi*, comprise all things entitled to be termed *yarkomirri*, which means that they are sacred by reason of dedication

[22] *Märdai'in* is the ordinary or "outside" name for the clan totem, of which the sacred or *därrpäl* (hidden, secret) name is *räŋga*. *Märdai'inboi* (of, or from, *märdai'in*) signifies that the object to which it is applied is sacred or tabu, that it possesses the quality of "power" or sacredness by virtue of its association with the *märdai'in* and hence it is *yarkomirri* and itself bears a name, i.e. the name of the clan totem to which it is dedicated. This at once restricts its use to members of a special cult, in this case to the fully-initiated members of the clan.